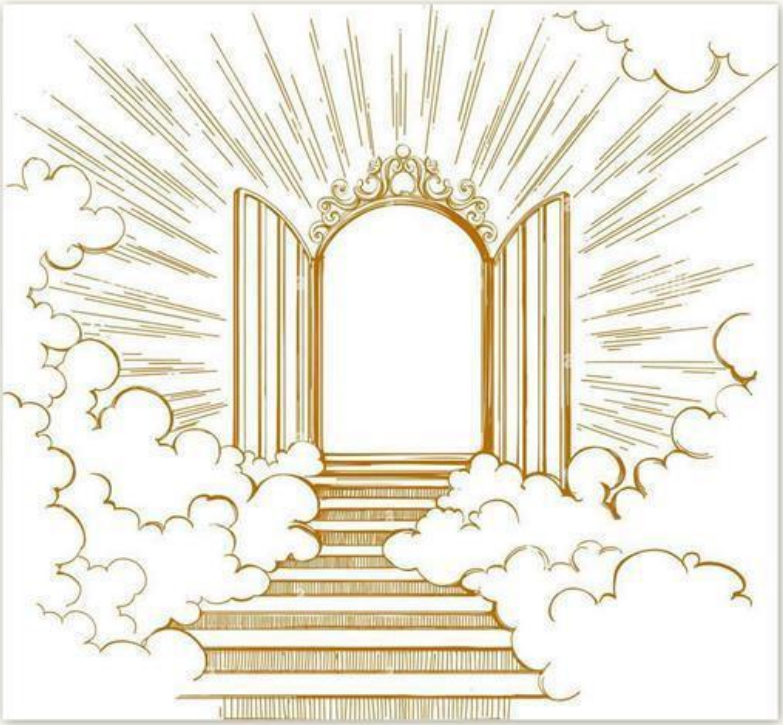
Desiderio Mussone



God, Self & Afterlife

(A Glance into Human Folly)

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(A Glance into Human Folly)

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By Desiderio Mussone

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ISBN 9781476320984

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“My” dog did not know that he had a name. He only learned to recognize the sound of the word Goya and responded to it accordingly. He had no idea what breed he was, where he came from… He was ignorant of social problems, politics, sports, “celebrities”… He could not care less about religion, God, meaning of life, if he had the immortal soul or not…

And, nevertheless, he was still one of the finest, most decent beings that ever lived on Earth.

19 July 2012 - 19 February 2025

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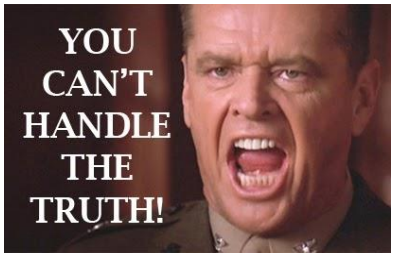
Introduction

The first lesson any junior manipulator has to learn in order to do his/her job well is: "Truth and knowledge are unsellable goods." Or, to paraphrase the "infamous" colonel Nathan R. Jessup from a 1992 American drama film *A Few Good Men*: People can't handle the truth!



So, if they want to get somebody to pay attention to what they are saying, if they wish to save the lost souls, win elections, or simply make some money, manipulators of all kinds have to:

a) Adjust themselves to the level of consciousness of not so intelligent majority.

b) Embellish the genuine, rough truth & knowledge to an extent, or preferably change them beyond recognition.

Bluntly speaking, they have to turn wisdom, authenticity, or veracity into bullshit. After that, the "product" is wrapped in a shiny paper and put on the market hoping that nobody notices that bullshit in a stylish package is still bullshit.

In the event you do not see it, this is how the original words of the sages from the past were transformed into religions, some of the best-selling books, or new age malarkey.

Not that long ago, while browsing the "Net", I stumbled upon a book titled *God is Nothingness: Awakening to Absolute Non -Being*. There were many favorable reviews. Guessing that it is somehow related to Siddhārtha Gautama (Buddha) and his teaching, I started reading it. However, at page 3, I pressed the X button at the top right corner of the screen.

It took me less than a minute to realize that the author of the book was/is a fraud – the Preface starts with: "This is a book

about Nothingness…" and then come about seventy pages of "somethingness".

It was just another disappointing example of how a wonderful and unambiguous perception of a brilliant man was partially used to create nonsense.

This "incident" could be considered as a trigger, but the real inspiration for the reply in the form of *God, Self & Afterlife* was a number of predominantly YouTube debates, or lectures on God, life after death, the origin of life… I have seen/heard over the years. Most of them were interesting, some of them amusing, but all of them were intrinsically futile, or useless – trying to fill the void with idle words.

Now, was it a too presumptuous thing to say?

…No, not at all. But, let's not get into detail now. It is what the book is about. For the moment, suffice it to say that I find it interesting (and this is an understatement) that the audience watching or listening to these events fail to discern the following: Essentially, there is no difference between the lecturers, or the participants of the debates – *what atheists **do not know** is exactly that what religious people **do not know***.

Let me explain by giving a sort of a "two-fold" example.

According to the latest statistics, about 85% of the world's population is the people who enjoy reading stuff like this:

> "*To continue in atheism, I would need to believe that nothing produces everything, non-life produces life, randomness produces fine-tuning, chaos produces information, unconsciousness produces consciousness, and non-reason produces reason. I simply didn't have that much faith*."

And, on the opposite side, there are about fifteen percent of those who will appreciate the subsequent (honest) "counter-proclamation":

"*To continue in theism, I would need to believe that God produces everything, God produces life, God produces fine tuning, God produces information and consciousness, God produces reason… And I would still not have the slightest idea about anything*."

Is it clear? Two sides of the same coin. The distinction is that the author of the first declaration thinks his phrases are a huge intellectual achievement or the proof of sagacity.

But they are not. In order to be a believer (or non-believer), man/woman does not have to be curious, talented, smart, or educated… All that is required of them is readiness to adopt some information without any doubt.

It is even worse if you are an individual with an academic title or someone who regards himself/herself as a scientist and says inanities like:

- "Both religion and science require a belief in God. For believers, God is in the beginning, and for physicists He is at the end of all considerations… To the former He is the foundation, to the latter, the crown of the edifice of every generalized world view." (Max Planck)[1]

- "The first gulp from the glass of natural sciences will turn you into an atheist, but at the bottom of the glass God is waiting for you." (Werner Heisenberg)

Namely, although your words sound well and appealing to religious people, and, for some vague reason, you are treated as indisputable authority on the subject, these sentences mean only one thing – your entire schooling, research, and invested effort were pointless, a waste of time. It appears that you

[1] A great instance of how a single statement discloses the real sly, arrogant (but actually feeble) nature of a (small) person hidden behind the shield of his church and religion.

acquired a lot of information, made some discoveries, wrote a few books… but, despite all that, remained ignorant.

Moreover, these quotes are a paradigm, matrix which exposes the way most human minds work: You do not declare that you are puzzled, or perplexed because it is usually interpreted as weakness, lack of credibility… So you replace the darkness you have stumbled upon with a socially (religiously) suitable tag and the balance is restored.

You have managed to maintain the semblance of success and personal grandeur but, alas, lost the edge – nobody can see the dividing line between benighted, blue-collar believers and revered physicists who "discover" a supernatural, omnipotent Great Old Designer at the end (?) of their quest.

…Or those who do not believe.

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Anyway, the real issue here is not ignorance itself – if you do not know something, you admit it and stop talking, there is no harm done, nothing bad will happen.

Trouble arises when people start discussing things they know nothing about and yet strongly believe in what they are saying – convinced that they are right.

Mathematicians *measure* infinities and find they're equal

*Two mathematicians have proved that two different infinities are equal **in size**, settling a long-standing question. Their proof rests on a surprising link between the **sizes of infinities** and the complexity of mathematical theories.*

(Quanta Magazine, September 2017.)

Trouble escalates when those who listen to such manipulators like their words and welcome them as "true". At that moment ignorance converts into "knowledge" and is rarely questioned.

Eventually, hardly anyone notices anything unusual or strange when someone begins to explain nothingness; describes red color to a blind person; writes (and declaims) a poem about silence; gives an account of a living person's "*after-death*" experience, estimates the length of eternity…

In brief, that is how, imperceptibly, without any noteworthy resistance, the seductive allure of *false knowledge* pervaded every sphere of human life (science included) and words lost their meanings.

Describing concepts which cannot be described, or which do not exist has become completely normal (even indispensable) activity, and taking insignificant ideas and theories seriously has been a mandatory part of upbringing and education for a long while.

Thus, it is no wonder mankind has devolved into a dull-witted species of "mental masturbators" desperately striving to make sense of the nonsense inside and around them blissfully unaware that the only way to do it "effectively" is by disregarding the common sense.[2]

As said before, vast majority of them are theists and believers. Their leaders, religious and political officials, rule (most of) this world, and, in the course of time, those "smoke sellers" have perfected the arts of distraction, lying, and mind molding with a single aim: to make their minions comfortably numb in the mud of deception.

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[2] Here is how the two mathematicians above did it. They:

- identified the imaginary world from their brains with the actual world around them;
- forgot/ignored the basics – that the words "measure", "size" and *infinity* **do not collocate together**, **exclude each other**;
- invented a new, "appropriate" meaning of *infinity*;
- hid the wrong reasoning behind the complexity of mathematical theories, philosophical views, and language.

The other, considerably smaller group contains non-believers or atheists. For centuries, they have been trying to defy and debunk religious worldview but without any solid, significant success (in terms of percentage/s/, at least). On top of that, it seems that these days their publicly exposed front men have somehow got used to the role of "superior underdogs" who usually win the battles and always lose the war.

So here is the status quo: It is undeniable that the principal champions and promoters of the false knowledge and mass delusion on our ("flat") planet are the members of the former, religious party. It is undeniable as well that the incognizance of the latter, non-religious party unwittingly adds fuel to the fire. In a way, they are the ones, not the believers, who keep the bullshit machine running smoothly.

And it shouldn't be like that.

Rational, mindful, and objective persons would have regained perspective and, by now, would have asked themselves:

Why haven't we been able to pull the plug on religion so far?

What is it that we do not know, or do wrong?

Unfortunately, vanity prevails.

However, and fortunately, all this is not about non-believers, anyway. Here and now, they are only a means to an end – a much, much greater end. Do not forget, the dispute between atheists and theists is meaningless, ineffective, and it makes no sense to take sides.

These questions are no more than the initial steps in tracking and defeating the stealthy, insidious common enemy.

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There are several layers in the first answer and they all pertain to some prominent features of human nature (e.g. it is easier

to be a believer than a skeptic; short individual and collective memory; selective intelligence; avoiding difficult, distressing matters…), but that is a topic for another kind of book.

In this particular story, the focus will be put on these principal standpoints:

- Non-believers are the slaves of false knowledge just as believers are. It might be argued that their delusion is lesser than the delusion of religious people, but, in the end, it all comes down to this: *the root is the same.*
- Religion is not the wellspring of misunderstanding and ignorance. It is the product of these things. Religious texts are just words – there is no God in them.
- The teachings of the wise men from the (distant) past and religions that came later are not one and the same thing. The teachings are all about truth and hard work, while religions are mostly make-up and acting.
- Death is not the gateway to another life. It is a wake-up call.

Faced with the final curtain, human beings always sense that there is something wrong with their lives, learning, beliefs… One quick glance at the terrifying "deadly" oblivion provides an intense "Zen moment" – an explicit insight into how much the Gods from "the bottom of the glass of natural sciences", beer mugs, burning bushes, our minds... are worth. It becomes painfully obvious that believing/not-believing is not enough.

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The second question is, evidently, the perpetuation of the first and everything said above is the under-structure for the more elaborate answer which follows.

Of course, that answer (its greater part) is not something new or yet untold. The basic ideas, those pearls of ingenuity, have

been around for two-three millenniums but, regrettably, their lucidity is obscured by the enormous piles of mental rubbish zealously produced by the brains of numberless, more or less educated men and women who thought they got it better.

So the task is to uncover the covered, put theory into practice, identify the origin of false knowledge, and, above all, accept the axiom that emptiness/void/nothingness is not the enemy to be feared of, fought against, or kept away from.

As Lao Tzu said it 2500 years ago:

> "…The potter turns the clay to make a pot, but it is not the clay which gives the pot its usefulness – it is the empty space within the shape.
>
> When houses are built for windows and doors the openings are made; and it is on the spaces where there is nothing that the usefulness of the house depends.
>
> Therefore, just as we take advantage of what is, we should recognize the usefulness of what is not."
>
> (Tao Te Ching, 11)

Once the job is done, everything will fall into its ***(un)expected*** place and it will become clear that believing and not believing are seemingly purposeful but essentially misguided activities/ brain processes whose outcome is self-delusion.

…That it is possible to know, or more accurately, to reach the point from which any further search is non-productive, and words stop.

…Become irrelevant.

***

Despite what dictionaries, or the people addicted to stupidities and illusions say, *disillusion* is a good, emancipating thing.
…Especially when the life is running out.

BREAKING THE SHELL

The more successfully and convincingly you expose and destroy someone's illusions, the more resolutely they believe in or hold onto them.

***

What you are about to read is a modification of the actual correspondence which took place a while ago. Namely, I read an online paper which assessed the notion of immortality from religious and philosophical points of view and then left a short comment: "A lot of information, but no real knowledge – truly philosophical." To my surprise, the author of the paper responded: "What is real knowledge? Do you know?"

I took up the glove and, at the end of a polite note, wrote: "…As for real knowledge, if you are honest about it, let's start from this: tell me something about you – Who are you?"

And, this is approximately how the dialogue went on, until it was stopped by my interlocutor. (Needless to say, the name and other details have been changed.)

Who are you? What is your name?

- My name is Salman Kesser.

What do those two words represent?

- Me…, I am Salman Kesser.

Very well, and what or who else are you? Tell me more about yourself.

- Well, how do you mean: physically, metaphysically, or sociologically? Sociologically, I'm an assistant professor at Istanbul University and I live in Turkey. I am a Turk, a Muslim… a Trabzonspor football team fan… Physically, I'm a man consisting of body, blood,

and some feeling. I feel pain when I am hurt, joy when everything is fine… Lastly, metaphysically, I am a man who is free, responsible, created by God from the spirit of God and protected by God, endowed with mind. I sense, think, believe…

Good. All this is you, your Self or I?

- Yes. This is what makes me "man". This individual, personal consciousness defines us and our lives. And, since I (and most other people) believe in afterlife, it defines death as well.

Hence, to sum up: You are a combination of several physical and "non-physical" features ("inputs") joined together by the "thing" called the soul?

- Yes, but the soul is incorporeal by nature, immaterial, without any specific location. It is our personal being, which encompasses knowledge of our personality and its unity (which does not leave us from childhood to maturity).

OK, now think about this: Would that which is alive or conscious "in you", which listens and hears, watches and sees (the "core", or the "soul") change in any way if one day you, by your own will, stopped being Salman Kesser and became Vito Pavolini?

- No, it would not.

So, it seems that your name and surname do not represent/ describe/define… that which is alive or conscious in you?

- Apparently.

Would that which is alive/conscious in you alter in any way if you resigned from your position at the University and started working as a carpenter?

- No.

So, that which is alive or conscious in you has nothing to do with your title of Professor?

- Apparently.

And it would remain identical if you stopped being a Turk and a Muslim and became an Italian and a catholic?

- Hm. It will never happen. What's with the third degree here? I do not appreciate it.

…Interesting, "You" do not appreciate it. Would that which is alive in you change in any degree if "You" appreciated it?

- Let's stop this "experiment". I have a meeting in a few minutes.

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The result of the "experiment":

In not more than five minutes "the mental bubble" (or the way of thinking) of an average, normal person cracked and some alarming aspects appeared. All those high-sounding, "big" words from the beginning of this conversation turned into useless groups of letters which did not serve their purpose.

It is unfortunate that Salman withdrew from the dialogue prematurely. If he had continued with it, he would have learned many other curiosities. For instance, the living and conscious "entity" in him really does not change if he stops being a Turk and a Muslim and becomes an Italian, a catholic, or perhaps an atheist.

He would have realized that it stays unaffected even if a man starts supporting Galatasaray instead of Trabzonspor…

…That you can modify opinions, beliefs, moods, convictions … and "the essence of your being" always remains the same.

You cannot measure it, define, or pin it down – whatever you think you are, you are not!

Salman would also have found out that he is not free, exactly because "he" is a Muslim who has to obey the rules, uphold traditions, and defend his religion if necessary.

…Because "he" is a Turk – probably willing to die for his country or some other "higher" cause.

…Because "he" is responsible (i.e. tied to his family, political affiliation, community…) and, therefore, a slave. It makes no difference if it is by choice – voluntarily, or by force – involuntarily.

Simply put, *you do not control religion – it controls you. You do not control national interests, the government, or "your" family – they control you*.

And these are all indisputable, unbeatable facts. And, yes I know how odd (insane) this must sound to somebody who has never thought about these things in this way. Or, to be precise, who has never thought about these matters at all.

It is all different from (completely opposite to) what you have heard, read… in all these years since you were born. You do not like it, and you choose not to accept the reality (as most people have done over the ages), but it does not/cannot diminish the value or importance of the discovery. It does not make it incorrect. On the contrary, this discovery makes everything we know about ourselves incorrect.

It turned out that Salman, the same as 99…% of other human beings, had plenty of data about his "Self" but no concrete knowledge. In other words: When one speaks or writes about themselves, they become fiction story authors.

You may try arguing, or denying this, but it will only show that you are a stubborn, insincere person. It is irrelevant how

good you are with words and how educated you are, because here is another fact:

WHEN THE BASIS OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE IS WRONG, you can add as much information to it as you like, and develop your ideas and views indefinitely, thinking that you are a brainiac, but ALL YOUR SUBSEQUENT LEARNING IS WRONG AS WELL. It is the harsh and irrefutable truth.

Can you grasp, or sense the implications of this sentence?

In any case, by now, you should be able to acknowledge the following:

"I" is not Salman – Salman is a label for the body.

"I" is not a Turk – the word Turk is just another label on the package.

"I" is not a professor – it is a title which tells you what Salman does for living.

"I" is not angry – the body *feels* anger.

…

(Tribute to Anthony De Mello)

MASTERS OF DISTORTION

"A*ll things are a mirage, a cloud castle, a dream, illusion, without essence*…" (Buddha)

***

It may sound paradoxical, but it is not at all: in time people have gathered so much information but lost real knowledge. Most intellectuals, philosophers, scientists, theologians… did not know (and do not know) what they were/are talking about. And that is the primary reason why today there are so many different religions and sub-religions, philosophical schools of thought, psychological systems… If those people had not understood everything superficially and wrongly that would not have happened, would it?

Diversity of religious thought is the finest proof that religious thought is not based on truth and knowledge.

Only ignorance can sustain several (hundreds of) confronted "truths" concurrently.

So, how did it happen?

The majority of people have always learned about the world indirectly. At first, they listened to the stories and experiences of elders and travellers. After that, knowledge was obtained from books; and, ultimately, our teachers have become radio, television, the Internet… Even the consciousness of ourselves is largely a result of the same principle: we are told what we need to know and we think that's it.

Unlike most of us, the greatest minds of our species acquired their insights all by themselves, through practice, employing the existing learning as a lever which introduced them to the reality they personally experienced and figured out. They reported their findings by using terms and names, and it is/

was all right, or very helpful from the aspects of studying, communication, science…, but they forgot to notify us that *the key characteristics of words are stillness and invariability*. Their usage breaks and stops reality which is always whole and in motion. Therefore, it cannot be described with words. Once you say: "a tree", you have already replaced what you are looking at with a tag, and that specific, distinct tree in front of your eyes is lost in everything the designation "tree" signifies, or is supposed to signify. It still exists, the tree is still there, but only as a general term – we do not really see it any more.

By the same token, you can write a 200-page-long book about red color, full of explanations, quotes, details… but it will be a complete waste of time, energy, and paper. All you have to do is show a few pictures. And, this is exactly why *you cannot describe red color to a blind person*.

Words are just an indication, not the representation of reality. That should be the starting point of any search for knowledge. Once a seeker masters that lesson, they can go on with the best compass in their hands. …It is all about being able to use the tool properly, not about itemizing the names of tool parts.

The acquired knowledge is kept and passed on in the form of language patterns, but it also disappears when we tightly hold on to words and meanings. This explains why people are constantly bored, and why our childish curiosity and awe are inevitably substituted with the state of indifference in which we often remain for the rest of our lives. We generalize and analyze but actually do not see, hear, comprehend. The more we try to make something clearer, the vaguer picture we get. We "feel" or are convinced that we know something, because we repeat some(one else's) reports or statements and follow certain rituals and traditions but, in fact, do not differ much from a parrot or a trained monkey which imitates what it sees.

The truth is, most of the stuff we learn in school or at home can help us live our everyday lives as an ordinary person, and, obviously, if we want to blend in (i.e. become a distinguished member of the community) we have to think, or behave in a certain, socially recommended way, but if we really want to get acquainted with life, consciousness, death, god… all these sentences we have gathered from books, other people… are of no use at all.

***

The ground of knowledge, as well as ignorance, is silence and emptiness.

When you start filling silence and emptiness with information, instead of using them as means to gain insights and understanding, false knowledge occurs.

The dirty dance of ignorance begins…

PERSONAL / INDIVIDUAL / SELF CONSCIOUSNESS

Only a man who thinks he knows something about himself can have identity crisis.

If you are searching for your true self and are constantly bumping into this or that – keep on searching!

***

From now on, the phrase "that which is alive or conscious in us" will be frequently replaced by ***I*** or the "essence of being". The words "Self", ego, "I" and similar expressions will be used for the "personal realm".

Additionally, a reader has to apprehend that ***I*** is not the right word. Actually, the "right" word ***does not exist***. It is just the least wrong word.

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Most of what an average human being knows about themself has been welcomed from various sources in the course of life. One's own, private contribution to that "construction" is often quite modest. However, the proportion is of no consequence – all those countless pieces of information revolve around the same axis, and they are false! They do not represent, or depict that which they are supposed to represent and depict.

Try to imagine and describe the beginning of your life after emerging from your mother's body. …Undoable. Because the second you start talking, you use words, names of organs, terms designating bodily reactions… and keep on saying "I", "my", "me"… But, you, a new-born baby, have no conception of what you (a …-year-old-man/woman) are trying to do. The baby watches and sees something, listens and hears some sounds, but is nevertheless clueless!

Still, in a few days, new consciousness will irrepressibly start to unfold. The body is exposed to many external influences: presence of people, bathing, diaper changing, breastfeeding… The senses are doing their job nourishing the fast-growing brain. "Likes" and "dislikes" crop up. Joy or anger…

In the third year (give or take few months) we begin to use the word "I". Until then we do not talk about ourselves, speak in the third person, or use the name: "John wants…", "Marianne goes…" At that age the process of building something which psychologists call "ego" (merely a Latin word for "Self/I") is officially started, and for many people this activity lasts for as long as they live.

The first semi-conscious utterance of "I" marks the onset of our (un)conscious drifting away from that which is alive in us – the innate, primary *I*.

This is the time when "we" become one with the creations of the brain: ideas, experiences, thoughts… and, necessarily, the consciousness of "Self" is rapidly developed. Little by little, fear and other emotions arise – the unmistakable signs of an already conceived and evolving ego.

Eventually, due to the sway of the family, educational system, social environment, particular interests, we adopt all kinds of data which make us religiously instructed, nationally oriented, culturally versed, morally acceptable. The more we identify with some national, religious, political, cultural… affiliation, sports club, a street gang… the stronger we react if someone negates/underrates our convictions, beliefs, choices… because they negate and underrate us, our feelings.

All sorts of politicians and authorities from numerous parties, institutions, and media remind us of "our" heritage, history, heroes… and encourage us to cherish them. So, we take pride in "our" heritage and history, uphold "our" traditions, and do

the very things ordinary people have been doing from time immemorial: bow to symbols, slavishly use words and names, strictly hold on to their meanings, and thus recognize and define ourselves as "such and such" convinced that it is the greatest truth in this world.

Nonetheless, as we have just found out, it is easy to estimate the value of personal consciousness and identity. All you have to do is imagine that you were born and raised in a family of disparate national, religious, social… background. Stop being Salman Kesser for a few minutes and "become" Vito Pavolini – your entire, allegedly discrete "cognitive content" which in (not solely) your opinion makes you defined or "unique" will become totally different. And it will still, again be worthless, inappropriate, because the true nature of (your) being is un-affected, unchanged, undefined.

Personal consciousness is a virtual creation which describes itself – nothing else. Identity is *a tale told by an idiot, full of* words *signifying nothing*. Once you realize that, you can never have "the identity crisis".

Now, what about thoughts and emotions?

Well, they are inseparable part of self-consciousness, and we have seen that Salman believes thoughts and emotions make him "human". If only he was alone in that – everybody has heard of this famous proposition: "I think, therefore I am (or, I exist)", and, moreover, everybody knows that our lives are subordinated to emotions – we are trained not *to experience* emotions, but ***to be*** emotions: "I am angry!", "I am sad." For future reference, that is the problem, not emotions per se.

Anyhow, thoughts are indeed the stuff the self-consciousness is made of, and, with that in mind, one can easily deduce that the consciousness of a new-born baby is not the same or of the same quality as the consciousness of a grown man.

This actuality leads us to disambiguation: there is *elementary* consciousness (**not** synonymous with the so-called "*universal consciousness*"); then there is awareness; and in the last place, there is personal consciousness. They are *three things*. The first is the source/base, and the other two are "by-products".

Some empirical examples of the difference between personal consciousness and awareness are often recorded in medical practice: as it is well known, it is possible for someone to suffer a complete memory loss, to survive a stroke and to be left without many functions of "ego consciousness" (speech, recognition, thinking straight…), but they are still in contact with the surroundings – as a new-born baby. This doubtlessly shows that awareness (as well as elementary consciousness) does not depend on self-consciousness and its contents.

***Consciousness exists even without thoughts*.** ...Or awareness, for that matter – when a person sleeps, there is no awareness, but consciousness is still there. "Unconscious" actually means unaware, not *without consciousness*. The cause of confusion here is the public misconception about what consciousness is. (See the next chapter.)

Finally, thoughts come and go, change in accordance with the state of mind, and *I* always remains identical. Hence, thoughts do not represent the essence of anybody's being. ***When "we" do not think, it is still "there".***

It is alike with emotions. They come, go, change… and *I* stays intact.

Each feeling is represented by a physical and mental reaction to environmental and other influences – they reflect our own experience of reality. But, one thing must be crystal clear: the mental component of any emotion appears exclusively as a result of subjective estimation (i.e., acceptance, or rejection of these influences), and most frequently that reaction has

nothing in common with the reality itself. The way we (will) intellectually respond to some situation depends on how "the received input" is usually dealt with, or how strongly we become attached to it. Here is a beautiful short story which confirms this assertion:

Two Japanese Buddhist monks, Tanzen and Ekido, were travelling together. It was raining hard all day. While passing through a small town they met a beautiful young girl in a silk kimono. She was standing at the sidewalk unable to cross to the other side of the muddy road.

"Let's go girl." said Tanzen, and without hesitation he took her in his arms and carried across the road.

Ekido did not say a word and remained silent for the rest of their journey. In the evening, when they arrived at the temple where they were supposed to sleep for the night, he could not restrain himself any longer:

"We monks do not approach women." he said angrily, "Especially if they are young and pretty. It is dangerous! Why did you do it?"

Tanzen looked at him in wonder, "I left the girl over there, why are you still carrying her?" (Zen Flesh, Zen Bones)

When allowed, emotions perfidiously take over human lives and turn people into addicts who constantly seek inspiration, pleasure…, and try to fill "the emptiness within".

They are the ones which make love "blind"; convert facts into biased personal opinions; science into psychology; laws and rules into temporary solutions; Zen into spa-like experience…

Emotions are the music to the dance of ignorance.

And, if your body feels irritation right now, it simply means that your brain has "information processing disorder" which

has thereby activated a defense mechanism as a way to protect the tower of delusion constructed in your mind.

It has nothing to do with the correctness of the information you have just read.

Conclusion:

That which is alive or aware in us is not "a person". It *does not think*. It cannot be affected by words, deeds, behavior of other people, or anything else, and so it *does not feel* / *has no emotions*. It just IS.

Living a life does not require having strong convictions, high goals, complex identity… There are sane and happy people on this planet who do not care about politics, professional sports, organized religion, social media, wealth, fame…

They may believe in life on other planets, that life cannot be explained by mathematical formulas… but do not let their beliefs run their lives or shape their mental outlook.

They also know that words like nationality, ideology, race, religious denomination… are no problem at all, and they cannot be blamed for anything. They are part of, or a result of a conditioned model of thinking generated by the human kind from its earliest days. Those words, by themselves, do not provoke any conflicts, suffering, or wars. The problem is the concepts of those words created in the minds (and filled with raw feelings and beliefs). The problem is our attachment to these words and the lack of essential knowledge which would tell us: "It is not your (or anyone else's) identity." Those are only the outer shells, the labels which ignorant people mistakenly take for their Self. It is useless, even feeble-minded to argue/fight with somebody about these matters.

THAT WHICH IS ALIVE OR CONSCIOUS IN US AND THE BODY

…Consciousness, awareness, and personal consciousness. As already stated, they are not one and the same thing. The specific difference between consciousness and awareness is best explained in the following way: *Contrary to awareness, consciousness can exist outside, or independently of organic bodies*, e.g., in the form of electromagnetic (TV, radio) signals.

Another fact which should be pointed out at the beginning of this chapter is this: consciousness is not the exclusive trait of the species with brains as most psychologists, philosophers… think/believe.

> "All consciousness arises from the brainstem, and it starts as feelings." Mark Solms, a South African psychoanalyst – one of many professional spreaders of ignorance into this world.

Every living being, or a single cell in an organism, processes as much information as it requires for normal functioning and survival. Besides, all beings have memory and the ability to learn – even the lowest life forms (viruses and bacteria, for instance) react to external/internal impacts, adjust behavior, or mutate into a more advanced sort.

All this convincingly implies that intelligence is a constituting part of life at all levels too.

However, it should be clarified that the amount of processed data is not the indicator of a higher quality of consciousness, and, likewise, it does not determine the quality of intelligence, or the positive outcome(s) of its workings. Intelligence is a precondition for change, progress, adaptation…, but results of intelligent conduct are not always beneficial or helpful, either for man or any other living entity in the world. For example, a young tree which is trying to get more light in a pine wood is

doing what it can, or has to do, in order to fulfill that need: it is "stretching" itself by modifying the normal growth rate typical for that species but, simultaneously, it sentences itself to premature death because the thin trunk cannot hold the weight of the top.

Analogously, an intelligent person does not necessarily have to be clever too, because, for some reason, they fail to apply intelligence in practice; or, worse, the practical application of their intelligence often results in stupidities. Too many times I have seen some quick-witted young people destroy their lives by drugs, alcohol, laziness, bad ideas…

And that is why intelligence should be plainly defined as the faculty to *react and create* – nothing more, or less. As for consciousness, it is the "content(s)" of reaction and creation.

(Does this mean that intelligence precedes consciousness?)

This important reality, this fundamentality of intelligence and consciousness, has induced a number of scientists to take the issue further and so today we have a theory which states that energy, matter, and consciousness are indistinguishable – the "One", meaning that each and every thing in the universe has, or is consciousness.

Accordingly, it has become "the ground of all being" (Fred A. Wolf) and is recognized at the level of subatomic particles. Physicist David Bohm was explicit: "The ability of form to be active is the most significant feature of mind, and we have something that is mind-like already with the electron."

(Incidentally, in this case, *mind* is a poor choice of words.)

Indeed, one must acknowledge that chemical elements react and create. The radiation of the Sun can be/is interpreted as a signal or information meaning "Light", "Over here.", "Hot", "Drought"… and we handle such "reports" on a daily basis – as you know, many aspects of our lives depend on how well

we understand these “communications” (although the sender is indifferent of whether we received them or not – THERE IS NO /supreme, or any other/ MIND involved in, or responsible for the creation of the information itself).

Furthermore, an earthquake is a consequence of certain movements in the Earth’s crust and may often be a direct warning: “My friend, that house of yours was not properly built!” But, is the Earth aware of that message? Both in this and the previous case, we are discussing ordinary chemical, physical reactions which usually cause extra reactions within us.

And unlike the Earth, or the Sun, we are aware or can become aware of their and our (re)actions – quite as any mono-cellular being can. Namely, if you expose an amoeba to some benign external influence, it will respond to it adequately. However, if that influence is regularly repeated with the equal intensity, the amoeba will gradually stop reacting – it has accepted the harmlessness of the annoyance.

On the other side, a chemical reaction between two or more elements will always happen in exactly the same way if the conditions are alike.

Ergo, it turns out that consciousness has (no less than) two discernible levels: *chemical* and *biochemical*. Apparently, the latter has something to do or depends on the former, because it has been established that life itself is founded on chemical reactions. Still, an evident distinction should be noticed! The origin of *biochemical* consciousness is inseparably linked to the emergence of life. It is true that living & non-living matter are not independent substances, but ***isn’t it also true that it is only so in the living beings***?!

Therefore, here is *the* question: What is immanent to all life?

The answer has been known for some time: water and DNA. And neither of the two is alive in the real sense of the word.

Still, when you do the basic research, you inevitably come to the conclusion that the former is probably the most intelligent existence here and everywhere. It interacts with everything – individual elements, other molecules… Water forms complex compounds seemingly becoming something else; it adapts to various shapes and conditions; reacts to vibrations and all kinds of influences (including music, manifestations of human emotions…) by changing its structure; acts in accordance with the available energy; uses the easiest, the best possible routes, and when there aren't any, it transforms into another state.

Water molecules surround the DNA helix and play a vital role in the dynamics, flexibility, and stability of DNA fragments which have been identified as the real, visible creators of life and carriers of hereditary information. …And are found in everything that lives on Earth.

So the bottom line is: ***That which is alive in humans is equivalent to that which is alive in a dog, snake, or an oak***.

The length of the DNA chain (the number of genes) is the sole thing which differentiates one species from another. The more similar their DNA is the more closely related they are.

In other words, genes contain the information that "produces" life and enables it to stay alive and to "grow". And, as soon as the word information is mentioned, it is understood that we speak about consciousness as well – it is obvious that DNA is the source and conveyor of *biochemical consciousness* which "mobilizes" matter and puts the "first" cell in operation. Needless to say, the consciousness of that cell is the source of consciousness for all other cells in a body and, definitely, the overall activity comes about on its own, without any outside guidance or intervention.

There was nothing chaotic in the functioning of the first cell and, hence, there will be nothing chaotic in the functioning of

a new-born child, provided that the "hardware" is all right! The rudimentary mode of operation is identical.

In a nutshell, the cell processed the pieces of inside or outside information with no problems at all and did everything it was supposed to do so as to survive. A new-born boy or girl will perform the comparable tasks and operations, only with a little help from the side in the beginning. The (final) upshot depends on the standard of the equipment and the way it will be used.

Yet, at this moment, it is very important to comprehend that ***a cell becomes conscious (aware) of the environment, or itself, through its membrane, i.e. body, not DNA***! It is the same with any plant, bee, elephant, or man. Genes are "simply" the instructions manual for the production of the membrane, legs, leaves, flowers, wings, pollen basket, spine, eye, lung… – the entire organism. These biological structures open the door to awareness.

Key fact: ***In order to become "conscious", consciousness requires a living body*.**

And that is how/or when self-consciousness pops up: *the body → awareness → self-consciousness*. Naturally, the body itself does not hold on to, or depend on its "personal" data. A body is just a body – you can name it whatever you like, it does not care.

That which is alive or aware in us *"knows" that it is alive and conscious thanks to the body*, but is not the body itself.

It is easy to prove. We can have almost any part of our head corrected or operated, thus completely changing our physical appearance, but *I* is unchanged. This intervention may modify our behavior or personality, but the essence of our being stays intact. It is neither prettier, nor happier than it was before "the nose job".

Similarly, when we lose a leg or any other (not vital) part of the body in an accident, our self-consciousness, experience of ourselves is almost always altered, but that which is alive "inside" us is not damaged in any way. It stays detached even if/when our heart, liver, or a kidney is replaced with another, matching one.

Finally, the body that we have now we did not have when we were conceived although we "had" the elementary consciousness which would eventually generate it and bring into being. Nevertheless, there is no qualitative difference between the (initial) awareness of the primary cell and the awareness of the fully formed body: that which is alive in a zygote is identical to that which is alive in a new-born baby. "It" is not affected by the body in which it "resides". You can call it *I*, the soul, God… but remember: these are just empty words invented by human beings, without any real meaning.

By the way

Even if scientists succeeded in recreating conditions that led to the origin of life (if they haven't already), it would mean very little, if anything at all, because, you know, it could have happened in that way, but it didn't have to. And, ironically, most people would hail it as an uncontested proof that it takes "Someone" (God) to create life.

There is this bunch of people called creationists (distinguished members of the religious majority which rules the world we live in) who promote the tenet which says that universe and life are results of supernatural acts of divine creation. Here are some representative pieces of that doctrine obtained from their books and articles:

- "The universe in which we live is a secret. It is a miracle of God's creation."

- “Human speech is a secret – it is a divine gift, a miracle.”

- “So far, we have failed to understand why that happened.” [the enlargement of the cerebral cortex] “Could it be that man was created like that?”

…

Clearly, if nothing else, the conclusions are consistent – these people haven’t got the faintest idea of what they are talking about, but they are sure that it was created that way, that God did it for some reason.

And this is how the postulation of creation is “proved”: first, some life form, let’s say a lion, is described in detail by using scientific methods and learning; then admiration towards its perfection, function, and beauty is expressed; and, lastly, a victorious announcement is made: “All that cannot result from pure coincidence. It is *the evidence of creation*. It is the act of an omnipotent and intelligent creator.”!

However, the problem is as follows: *the evidence may indeed be there, **but the proof is missing*** – it was not provided. The same applies to the theory of evolution, the Mandelbrot’s set (seen as “the code of creation”, or as a “no God argument that simple patterns make complex things”)… None of these and other explanations/descriptions tell us how life/universe came into existence in the first place. The implication of deity is a matter of choice, or rather, lack of knowledge.

What we are actually talking about is *supposition(s)*. The one invoking God may be more logical than the one asserting that life appeared “by accident”, but it does not have to be more truthful. The word *logical* is not the synonym for *true*.

Let me tell you a story:

Long time ago, a man called Aristotle saw two stones, one weighing approximately 2 kilos and the other which weighed

only 200 grams, lying on the ground. Without any doubt in his mind, he immediately deduced that, if dropped from a 20-meter-tall building at once, the heavier stone would hit the ground sooner than the lighter one. Logical, isn't it?

For many centuries Aristotle's reasoning was considered to be the absolute truth. But, then, a man called Galileo took two stones of different weight in his hands, simultaneously dropped them from some leaning tower, and undoubtedly proved that Aristotle's inference was false – both stones hit the ground at the same time.

***

The planet Earth and the life on it did not appear by accident. They are *the result of hundreds, and hundreds, and hundreds, and hundreds… of* ***billions*** *of* (unsuccessful) *random attempts all over the Universe, and over time,* which finally gave rise to one(?) rather fragile success.

Turn your attention to the clear night sky in some elevated, unpolluted part of the world and you will see what is meant by this.

THAT WHICH IS ALIVE OR CONSCIOUS IN US AND THE SOUL, OR GOD

According to the authorities on the subject: “The soul is a part of God”, “the breath of life animating the flesh”, “the essence of man (considered to survive the death of the body), but not the man himself as a corporeal, psychosomatic being.”

“It is a unity of mental activities (often synonymous with the mind or the self), autonomous and independent in its work.”

“The soul is the spiritual part, or nucleus of a (human) being which includes one’s identity, personality, memories… – an immaterial aspect that is believed to be able to survive physical death.”

…

When a Christian is asked what the purpose of his religion is, or rather, what he hopes to achieve by being a member of a Christian church, he will readily answer: salvation of the soul and eternal life in heaven (after rejoining God).

Every Muslim believes in the one God and his message (Islam) so that he may receive salvation of the soul.

A Hindu will reveal that his final goal is liberation of the soul from samsara (cyclic existence, reincarnation).

Buddhists officially do not believe in “the soul”, but they have paths toward enlightenment or liberation of “something” from samsara. …

So the question is: What does the soul (or whatever) have to be saved or liberated from?

Apparently, these are the problems which (again) according to religious authorities, have everything to do with life but occur after death: Christians and Muslims want to prevent the damnation of the soul and its eternal torment in hell, while

Hindus and Buddhists want to break free from the cycle of rebirth(s).

Now, we have seen that for most people and religions the soul is a broad term which encompasses living processes, energy, information…, but it is abundantly clear that individual, self-consciousness is in the center of attention both in life and after death.

Furthermore, most religions agree that the soul, i.e. consciousness, is "given by God and returns to God", or is "a separated part of God".

And, as you "know", God is, among other things, omniscient. There are many people today who describe "him" as cosmic, universal consciousness which comprises "the entire past and future knowledge, experience of this and all other worlds."

???

God = a kind of cosmic "container", a gigantic information storage unit!?

God = …A person who knows everything about everything and everyone?!

Seriously?! (The right expression would be "WTF?!")

"God's knowledge" should not be, cannot be, and **is not** about quantity but about quality. Correspondingly, the ultimate, supreme understanding must be the distinguishing trait of the highest (or, is it the *lowest*?) level of consciousness which is, supposedly, immanent to the original state of the soul.

With that in mind, two questions arise: What is the consciousness of the highest level – god – the one who "knows everything" like? What is the supreme knowledge?

In order to get the answers to these questions people start from the following "facts" and assumptions:

- They are “the spitting image” of God;
- Consciousness evolves fastest in the human body;
- Human consciousness is the “essence of man”, it is of the highest level (compared to the other living beings) so it must be close to God’s consciousness.

But, here is the catch: The (right) answers cannot be obtained if we assume that human personal consciousness is important or significant cosmic category.

Why?

…Because it is nothing but a *noisy poem/story about silence*; a lengthy *description of emptiness* or anything else that cannot be described.

*It is **not** the essence of man. **It rises from ignorance, develops from ignorance, and consists of ignorance***.

If we want to have a look at first-class knowledge, or godlike consciousness, a different approach is needed. It will open the door to some astonishingly simple and enlightening insights.

Let’s start from the generally adopted descriptions: “God” is free, *omniscient*, omnipresent, bodiless, invisible…

Now consider this: What are thoughts of “the one who knows everything” like? What does he think about?

Well, **about nothing** – the one who knows everything has no thoughts, because “he” *has nothing to think about*.

“He” does not reason. “He” does not have anything to reason out – *what is unknown to him*?!

Likewise, the one with quintessential knowledge has no body, or shape, and **if there is no body, there is no awareness**.

In case you have difficulties accepting this statement, please remember the current (not exclusively) religious consensus:

God ***affects everything but is not affected by anything*** (time, matter, space). Therefore, "he" has *no impressions, feelings…* **"He" has no self-consciousness.**

"He" is also in the eternal state of freedom and so has no need to accumulate experience or satisfy needs and desires.

If God is eternal, omnipresent, and unconfined, then it can be observed as an initiator (since constant movement is /in/ its nature) and perhaps even as a creator, but certainly not as a manager, or supervisor! Management involves commitment and concern, and those things exclude freedom. A supervising God is neither free, nor omniscient, and it can hardly be omnipresent too.

What does all this mean?

Well, it means that there is no polarity between the lowest and the highest level of consciousness. They are indistinguishable. …The beginning and the end of the same circle.

It means that if something has no body, thoughts, emotions, desires, identity…, then it does not satisfy any requirement to be a person! "He" is not he at all! …Or she.

And, the belief that God is a person is the corner stone of most contemporary religions!! The opposite learning changes everything on such a large scale that it is hardly imaginable.

But, wait, all this sounds so familiar, doesn't it? Yes, twenty pages ago we established that that which is alive or conscious in us is not a person too.

Now let's go further.

If the soul is part of god, of the same value or nature, and as such "lives" in every life form, then we mustn't ever relate it to the body, personality or identity of a man/woman – to the consciousness "wrapped around" the body. And yet, that is

precisely what people do by saying that "*the soul loses its freedom and knowledge of its real nature after 'entering' the (human) body*".

And here is where this fallacy comes from: It is the conviction which says that the "Self" we have built or "discovered" in the course of our life is identical to the elementary ("DNA") consciousness we were given at conception. It originates from the fact that religious authorities could not (or did not want to) understand ***that the essence of our being*** ("the soul", "god") ***has absolutely no problems at all and has no need to learn anything – it is us, the misguided corporeal individuals, who have the problem which emerges from the ignorance of what the essence of our being is***!

That which is alive or conscious in us cannot be influenced by anything and that is exactly why it cannot be judged, and why it does not need to be liberated or saved.

The thing which can be judged is the idea of what we think we are – the "Self". But, as we have already seen earlier, there is no point to that, because the idea of "Self" is just that – an idea.

***

False knowledge is the only reason why believers are so keen that their "personal being(s)" survive the death of their bodies!

MORE ABOUT "GOD"

If someone already believes that God could appear on its own, out of nowhere or nothing, why do they reject the notion that so could universe and life?

***

When we "peeled off" all the layers of (or removed the labels from) our "Self", we discovered that "something" is there but cannot be seen, touched, defined… and is nothing of what we thought it was.

A minute ago it turned out that the thing usually referred to as "God" is a carbon copy of that – ***the One who is NOT***.

How, then, did it become "a person" and everything else it is believed to be these days?

Well, "it" never became a person, or anything else. Something else happened.

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Throughout history, wise men, and those not so wise, saints & sinners, scientists, amateurs, mystics, ordinary mortals… have been looking for the patterns, answers and explanations to the mysteries and wonders around them.

As pointed out, most of them set off into the adventure of learning something about life and universe exclusively from the previously fixed, preconceived standpoint. They used their own level of knowledge/education as a quality standard and, consequently, almost inevitably returned with the invisible perpetrator who stood behind everything and was often named (this or that) God.

Expectedly, they were all (even those few who came "empty-handed") eager to share their findings with friends, relatives,

fellow citizens… – whoever wanted to listen. Eventually, one or two fell silent.

Contrary to them, others continued to describe, elaborate on their experiences or, perhaps there is a better word, achievements in many ways and gave them different names, faces, and characteristics although they essentially discovered or experienced one and the same "thing". …Or, at least, they should have. Once they described it, the tellers started holding on to their pictures as the only truthful ones. But, soon they became restless and something had to be added, or removed – for the sake of improvement, better apprehension… A listener or a reader themself would immediately create an image about it in his/her mind, and that which had been depicted automatically assumed another form.

The thing, being, superhero… that people call God is found in the mind but also lost in it.

And that was the "moment" when religious experts came into play. Those who got to the bottom of various descriptions of God decided to streamline the business: "No, we cannot allow all those simpletons to walk around with so many visions of that God in their heads. It is senseless. It might be dangerous and, ultimately, it is not profitable!" So they quickly produced the most appropriate portrait which would be easily accepted by the masses, "went public", and announced: "God is this and that. He looks like this and that. He works in mysterious ways but his plans are known to us. From now on you must never doubt what we say because our words are God's words. If you do, you will go to some very ugly place when you die!"

In short, that is how people started believing in (and searching for) something that does not exist!

Indeed, this story has had some variations at different times and in different civilizations, but one actuality has always

remained constant: the "gurus" who persistently lecture about God, Allah, the Absolute… *know nothing of the subject at all*! They have simply heard something from somebody or have been taught about it from books. ***If they knew anything, they would not talk***! Plainly speaking, everything they know about god is wrong, just as everything they know about that which is alive or conscious in them is wrong.

Or, to rephrase it: *How can you know anything about God, when you do not know anything about that which is alive or conscious in you*?

Any concept of God was, is, and will be a result of ignorance and misconstruction – a replacement of the darkness in our minds with even darker darkness. "God" is a mental image created by human brains: the spiritual idol, matching our own personalities and needs.

ϙϙϙ

Dear scientists,

There is NO God at the bottom of the glass of natural sciences waiting for you.

God is not energy. …Or the other way around. Energy is energy, whatever it is.

God is not consciousness. …Or the other way around. Consciousness is consciousness, whatever it could be.

"God" is just an empty word the purpose of which is not to clarify but to mystify. And it is certainly not the common denominator of the two phenomena above.

Or is it one with several names?

Finally, *there is no such thing as unintelligent life*. But there are many dull-witted people. Do not indulge their stupidity and ignorance.

US AND DEATH

Surprise, surprise! Isn't it fascinating, that always fresh astonishment caused by the "unexpected" mindfulness of the improbability which suddenly becomes very probable and which "has always happened to somebody else"?

***

Human beings are the only species which is afraid of death and dying. Other "higher" animals fear danger, unknown, and do everything they can to avoid being killed, but when their "time comes", they have no problems with death itself. They peacefully go into the night.

Concurrently, and interestingly, humans are the only species which believes in life after death. Understandable, isn't it?

And do you know how believers "prove" that life after death exists?

Well, they use testimonies about reincarnation, the so-called "after-death", near-death, out-of-body experiences, reports of paranormal phenomena /or abilities/, religious heaven and hell explanations…

And guess what the single common "ingredient" of all these "proofs" is? It is ***personal consciousness***:

a) which was produced in the past by some man/woman/child and which emerges in another living body in the form of memories, images, emotions…;

b) which appears in about twenty percent cases of heart failure, brain damage… (near-death experiences);

c) which is generated or received independently of the senses and nervous system (brain) during some extra-ordinary occurrences.

However, here is the thing: this type of evidence can be regarded as trustworthy only by those who do not know that personal consciousness has the merit of a soap bubble. The key issue in this "puzzle" is not about thoughts, experiences, emotions… but about *who* or *what*.

Who/what is supposed to survive death? *Who/what* is "outside the body"? *Who/what* "lived the previous life"?

Who/what lives this life? *Who/what* is "I"?

Naturally, since the hereafter proponents and their opponents live in misconception that personal consciousness equals *who* or *what*, the ongoing, endless debate between them almost exclusively rests on vain validating and rebutting fabricated, hollow arguments which are taken for granted by either or both sides. Again, the false, ill-founded way of thinking is imposed as the only possible one and nescience is miraculously transformed into "knowledge".

Still, the futility of any kind of discussion about reincarnation, out-of-body perception, accounts from "the other side"… is efficiently disclosed by the already asked and several other straight-forward questions and answers. For example:

- If I have some (inexplicably acquired) information about the life of a dead girl named Kamaldjit Kaur in my head – does it doubtlessly mean that I *was that girl* in a previous life?

- Are the visions of/from "a past life" confirmation enough that the one who has them actually lived that life?

To put it bluntly, to claim that someone who talks about past (using the first person) also lived in that past is the same as to say that someone who talks about future (and even guesses the order of events) also lived in the future!

Besides, the idea of reincarnation founded on the belief that the soul survives death and goes (guided by karma) from one

body to another until it acquires wisdom and knowledge thus becoming one with God is ***wrong***.

Remember, "(the) soul" is always "part of god". It is not the transporter of accumulated individual consciousness. ***It does not need to learn or acquire anything***. Man does. Moreover, karma is a human "product" and, on that account, has nothing to do with that which is alive in a child, ant, leaf of grass… – karma cannot constrain or direct "the soul".

Lastly, the "journey (or transfer) of personal consciousness" from one life to another is senseless because, as some Hindu and Buddhist scholars managed to comprehend centuries ago:

"*…the infinite variety of appearances*" is "*a dream, nothing but the projections of your mind, treacherous and unreal.*

…You are bound to die soon, and nothing then will be of any real help. What you (think you) *experience in death is only your own conceptual reasoning.*

…Whatever grasps at everything existing and non-existing, good or bad, is your mind; …Do not cling to appearances, do not turn them into terms, do not accept or reject them…

Samsara is your mind, and nirvana is your mind; all pleasure and pain, and all illusions do not exist outside your mind. To attain control over mind is the essence of the practice…"

(Tsele Natsok Rangdrol, a Tibetan teacher from the 17th century; adapted)

Or in just one sentence: ***If self and its content are delusion or deception now, in this life, then they were in the past too, and will be in the future as well***.

What exactly would be the point of "transmigration"?

- Have any of the people who had near-death experiences, and lived to tell about them, really died during those events?

Nobody who really died has ever come back and told anybody what death is like.

Plain and simple, not one of those recounts can be treated as the confirmation of afterlife! The "returnees" do not describe life after death but their state of mind at the moments which (allegedly) precede death.

- Are near-death and out-of-body experiences, memories of past lives, extrasensory perception or communication with the dead… a valid proof that conscious, personal life goes on after the body dies?

No, they are not, to any extent. I mean, you can say/believe that information you "receive" comes from "your" previous lives, from the dead who are (not) related to you, anyone else who is still alive, or even that your "disembodied Self" is able to perceive the surroundings, but all that (if there is no other, concrete explanation[3]) could only mean/prove that:

1. Once produced individual/personal consciousness can exist "outside the body" and, as such, "roams" around the universe (as radio/TV signals do);
2. It is possible to "catch" it with our brains.

Everything else is a matter of subjective interpretation or "intellectual gymnastics" without any deeper significance.

Now, let's use the insights we have gained so far to get to the bottom of the "relationship" between personal consciousness and death. Let's ensure that the false knowledge and stupidity are eradicated.

[3] Brain tumours, epilepsy, drug abuse, schizophrenia, lack of calcium, lead poisoning, chewing of hallucinogenic plants, excessive use of alcohol…

Why are we afraid of death?

Because we instinctively (and consciously) want to live/go on living and death is the end of everything that we hold dear. This ubiquitous fear reveals the real strength of human faith in life after death doctrines and other similar theories. And, it concisely informs us that there is something erroneous in the way we live our life.

Often the smallest crisis can pierce the balloon of convictions, strategies, and "truths" behind which we hide. One isolated instant of panic unmistakably demonstrates how uncertain and fragile everything is. It explicitly exposes the futile character of the noise we are surrounded with, the activities we are engaged in, or our identities, thoughts, emotions…

Additionally, the body, our body we are pleased or displeased with, is betraying us. We cannot expect any support from the mind either. Watch it for a few minutes if you can. You will notice that it is like an ordinary fly which constantly goes up and down, left and right.

We are tense, and it is difficult for us to face death, because we persistently ignore impermanence as a fact of life. So we grab all we can and feverishly hold on to personal consciousness, objects, people… "This is me"; "This is mine"; "I feel". "I know…"

It is not hard to see that, with respect to death, people actually fear the prospect of nothingness, non-being, and the absence of reputedly defining, unique self-consciousness which makes us "Us", or alive in this life. Hence, we try to convince ourselves and others that "I" does not die, and accordingly, nothingness/emptiness/oblivion is filled (or replaced) with familiar "self-information" which does not merely survive but continues to develop after death in a sort of astral, spiritual, or immaterial body awaiting the Resurrection or a new birth.

But that fairy tale can be appreciated only by the weak and terrified who do not understand or accept the following:

a) When somebody dies, the "biological construction" which generated and held the "I" consciousness of that somebody together is dead, defunct.

Astral, spiritual, immaterial "bodies" are inventions of fiction. They do not exist as we imagine them to exist – "immaterial" means "bodiless"! There is no solidity. Those are not useful, functional "machines" with sensors, instruments… and they cannot interact with physical matter (e.g. hear – interact with sound waves, or see – interact with light). Those "bodies" are actually *fields* and *waves*. …The electromagnetic "carriers" of individual consciousness created and emitted in a lifetime.

b) "The knowledge of the unity of our personality", which is supposed to "survive and live on after death", ***has nothing in common*** *with that which is alive/conscious in us*, or anything/ anyone else.

This disillusioning discovery is the crucial point in ending the confusion and mental slavery. Once you concede the presence of "your own" *non-personal* "entity" which is very much akin (if not identical) to the nothingness/emptiness we are talking about, the widespread delusion in which almost all mankind lives becomes obvious.

The moment you acknowledge the "non-self" feature of the essence of being and get to know it, or rather, find out *what it is NOT*, you discern that there is/was no reason to be afraid of it, to avoid "meeting" it thinking that it will/would hurt you, turn everything upside-down, and destroy the very meaning of life itself.

…Because nothing bad has happened.

…Quite the reverse. You have realized that:

- Fear of death is proportional to the amount of ignorance, i.e. to the strength of our connection to "I" consciousness.

- We spend the entire life building, studying, and defining our own personality and identity but fail to observe that, ***without the body, all that knowledge has no importance, or value at all and completely loses its purpose of existence***.

Even if personal consciousness "transcends" death in some way, ***without the body it has no meaning***.

And that is why (in order for any religious, philosophical, new age… explanation of after death events to make sense) upon leaving the dead physical frame, the "disembodied self" must find itself in a kind of spiritual shape(?) which thinks, knows, and feels everything that the original body thought, knew, felt. What's more, "witnesses" say that it looks the same, or better.

However, this description is the sequel of dreams, out-of-body or near-death experiences (*told by* ***not-dead*** *people*) and must not/cannot be associated with actual death.

As explained above, regrettably for the interested party, there is no awareness in death. Due to lack of necessary means, the "astral/immaterial body" cannot provide further post mortem production and development of personal consciousness. And, to be forthright, even if it could, it would still mean nothing since, for the nth time, whatever ego/self is supposed to be (in this, or the "next" life), *the "soul" is not*!

There is no *qualitative (or other)* ***dissimilarity between "I" in the corporeal model and "I" in the "immaterial" replica.*** It is, in either case, just an imaginary character in a film we are watching. …A hologram or illusion.

- Everything that happens in our brain in everyday life, and particularly at the time of dying, cannot hurt us in the slightest because it is not real enough. The human mind is *the one who*

(in the form of ego) *gives power and the means of influence to both mental concepts and reality around us*. Yes, certainly, death is at hand, but it represents a problem only to the body and the illusions we are "tucked in", not to the essence of being.

- Dreams are a wonderful opportunity to acquire an insight in what is said above. Our behavior in the course of dreaming implicitly shows what our state of mind is now, and what it will be like at the last hour. If we scream when the "spiritual entity" is in danger, or feel ecstatic if something beautiful has happened to it, it means that we are one with that fantasy.

To break free, all we have to do is comprehend (over and over again) that nothing bad or good is happening to that which is alive or aware in us.

***

If we are not what we think we are now when we are alive, how can we be that when we die?

Or, the "eastern variant":

If we are not what we think we are now, in this life, how could we have been anything else in the previous?

DOES THAT WHICH IS ALIVE OR CONSCIOUS IN US SURVIVE THE DEATH OF THE BODY?

First, let's recapitulate:

Our personal consciousness is "human" – that which is alive or conscious in us is NOT. It is the same in every living form or being on Earth. "It" is also (mistakenly) called "the soul" or "God" by those who foolishly think that these terms are the beginning of understanding and knowledge. Sorry, they are not.

I do not know anything about the foundation of the universe, and, just as anybody else, have no idea how "nothing makes everything", or how "something comes into being", but I am familiar with these realities:

- Energy and matter are interchangeable.
- Energy exists in many different forms and cannot be created or destroyed.

Now, as that which is alive or conscious in us perfectly fits into this "description", there is no reason to suppose that the matching "attributes" are not pertinent to it as well.

And that is all there is to it.

In a laconic, yet rather effective way, this has answered the question from the chapter heading above. What is left now is to close the circle with a short summary. After that, any further argumentation would be counterproductive.

So, the thing which undoubtedly survives death is the energy previously materialized in the structure of our body.[4] We get

[4] Physically we, or any other form around us, are just visible, materialized energy. A body weighing 70 kilograms is, so to speak, a store-house for 70 kilograms of energy. As its remains decompose, they emanate energy.

it from our parents and, in most cases, forward it on in the shape of our children.

Then, there is the energy obtained through breathing, eating… and "sent back" as heat.

And at last, there is the energy manifested as personal consciousness – naturally, the most intriguing part of this story. While we are alive this energy is constantly released, or materialized in numerous forms (movements, books, chairs, drawings, houses…) thanks to the abilities of the body. When it ceases with its function, the possibility of materialization ceases too.

The identical law applies to thoughts. When brain stops with its work, the thought manufacturing process also stops. Still, we do not exactly know what happens to our thoughts after they have been produced and "used". Do they immediately transform into energy (decompose), go to a warehouse in the brain where they remain until the "owner" dies, or become a part of some everlasting "cosmic YouTube broadcast"?

The good news is that, in any case, *it simply does not matter*. Perhaps the electromagnetic energy really carries "the fields" of consciousness, or the brain waves all over the universe, and perhaps it is (or, will be) possible to "catch" the more or less long ago sent signals of dead people (emitted while they were alive, of course), but all that ***is irrelevant to life after death of any kind***, and does not affect the correctness of the following facts:

- Energy is neither positive nor negative – the outcomes of its workings can be positive or negative.

- Energy always remains energy, even when it is in a material form, and never takes on the characteristics of its creations. Electrical energy, as everyone knows, sets in motion and keeps in operation different home appliances but never, never

assumes the properties of these appliances, does not become any of these appliances!

Similarly, the corresponding "life force" or energy creates (through the enzyme DNA polymerase and nucleic acids/ nucleotides) many beings and puts them in operation, but ***never identifies itself with its "own" creations***.[5]

Appropriately, *the energy which "leaves" a body after death has the same quality then as when it started "making" it* – it does not carry with itself any personal information of that body. And, when you think about it, what would be the point of that?!

All segments of individual consciousness produced in a life-time, down to the most insignificant thought, were given their own energy at the moment they came into existence and thus should already be in the universe!!

- The energetic/material creation tagged as self-consciousness has as much importance, or power as we give it by identifying with it, or tying ourselves to it.

- That bondage is broken, and the power of self-consciousness disappears when we die or learn that we are not that (kind of) consciousness.

- The "Self" is the effect (and a tool) of delusion which serves its purpose but, in the end, does more harm than good.

That is the real knowledge.

[5] It is more than interesting that WATER "behaves" in equal manner: in gaseous condition it is pure, primary, and when it is fully materialized (as a drop of rain, for example), it starts to "accumulate experience", that is, to tie itself to different elements, and thus becomes contaminated. Water also creates different shapes. After they "die", it leaves "the body" in the form of steam and returns to its original state.

Prison break

In the beginning of life reality is a whole. Words do not exist.

The world is reflected in the eyes (brain) of a newborn baby. Reality lives in that initial, *natural* state of a human being but, sadly, not for long. Once self-consciousness becomes noticeable, when the first word is uttered, and definitions, concepts, emotions… start living in the minds of little people, reality starts to break.

Nevertheless, it is an unavoidable and, in our case, necessary stage of life which enables us to join the rest of the population and become like everybody else, *normal*. The original state of silent wonder slowly fades away. Curiosity, innocence, and brightness of a child are replaced with terms, identity, beliefs … – hollow words behind which boredom and ignorance are hiding.

We gradually turn into puppets who are trying to create some ideal, separate, miniature cosmoses – the shelters which are supposed to protect us from the unwanted impacts. But, in the long run, it never works since our plans and desires are rarely (if ever) in tune with the ways of the universe itself. Most often, one thing is offered (available), we prefer another and, inevitably, frustration and disappointments surface.

Consequently, pain and fear grow and get stronger. In order to eliminate them, we pursue dreams, buy hundreds of articles which "make us happy", and cling on to millions of ideas to keep our minds occupied. There are sedatives in the form of "fun" too, and many other forms of self-delusion which bring us what we need: a momentary delight, relief, or the illusion of these things. Nobody is alarmed because all that is normal. (Or, it is what we have been told.) So people bear suffering, voluntarily and persistently. They even depict the paths to love, God, happiness… as sublime suffering.

Concisely, it can be described like this: You are climbing a mountain and carrying a load on your back. The longer you are going upwards the load is becoming heavier and heavier, not only because you are getting tired of walking but because, as you are climbing, you are adding more stuff thinking they might be useful someday. You do not ask yourself if that is good for you, or a clever thing to do, since everybody else around you is doing the same.

Occasionally, with the bundle on their backs, they take a short break, tell a few jokes, and go on climbing… – until death stops them. …Until it is your turn. And then, your soul takes your load over and carries it to eternity, or into a new life.

How interesting! Such stupidity and cluelessness are actually stunning! Somehow we are unable to see that moving is much easier without the burden, and that the purpose of climbing a mountain is not the climbing itself!!

So what do we do? We strive to change the scenery around us with the aim of making the journey somewhat prettier or, at least, more bearable. Over time, somewhere along the road, art, religion, drugs, psychology… were invented – to avert our thoughts from actuality; to make us numb; to explain why the load is important (in case there are any doubts); to comfort us when somebody close to us dies…

However, it is undeniable that these inventions do not do the trick. As life passes, we become more and more stupefied and further away from freedom, truth, peace, enlightenment… whatever, because right from the start we have been riding on the spiral of nescience and illusion.

And this has been going on for thousands of years!

Once again: WHEN THE BASIS OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE IS WRONG, you can add as much information to it as you like, and develop your ideas and views indefinitely, thinking

that you are a brainiac, but ALL YOUR SUBSEQUENT LEARNING IS WRONG AS WELL.

Therefore, it is understandable why most normal people can't handle the truth and find it ugly, brutal, harsh, disturbing, or irritating.

"What, then, is the purpose of life?", "Is it all for nothing?" runs through the heads of those who have been, for a long time, struggling to fill the existing and persevering emptiness in their lives with words, thoughts, God, belief in hereafter, children, fun, friends, politics, sex, money… secretly knowing that it cannot be done.

They live completely oblivious of their genuine (inner) nature and are unable to see the world around them with the eyes of a child: without distortions, prejudices, judgments… People spend the old age obstructed by fear, living in a cage they have made themselves and cannot go out as they have thrown the key away! Nobody seems to get *that death itself is not the cause of the fear of death*. It is literally as follows: ***life based on delusions makes people fear death***.

Anyone who wants to get rid of this (and every other) fear has to leave the normal and enter the *clear mind* stage. In it we reappraise priorities and transcend our "Self" (everything it encompasses), accept it as a necessary evil, and start putting the broken pieces of reality back together.

Instead of grabbing to which we are addicted, it is vital to do exactly the opposite: to loosen the grip, let go, and not try so hard.

Eventually, words, convictions, and feelings become (much) less dominant; boredom disappears; the fear of nothingness or emptiness evolves into curiosity, and you start enjoying solitude (it is the unmistakable sign of content and happiness which, by the way, is not an emotion).

There is nothing more important a man/woman can do in his/her life because: *(Your) Life and death are in (your) mind and nowhere else*.

The human mind discloses itself as the source of knowledge and ignorance, suffering and happiness, wisdom and stupidity. It is the factory of illusions from which every "cloud castle" in this world was, is, and will be built.

…Prison and/or haven.

Unfortunately, most of us are utterly unaware that *the state of mind is the only "thing" we really have – both now and at the moments which precede death*! …The only support we could rely on. And that is why it (the mind) has to be: a) disciplined and b) cleansed.

The first task is not that easy, but it can be done. There is only one rule: *never do two (or more) things at the same time*.

You are here, at this moment, and your mind should be here, at this moment. If/when it seeks (and seemingly manages) to be somewhere else, at some other time, *the result is that **you are neither here nor there*** and, on top of that, an indefinite, anxious feeling which causes tension always arises. The *now* is passing, you are not aware of it, and, as (not) expected, you have missed it.

Ultimately, the life has ended, and you have not been around.

The other process (cleansing) commences when you begin to realize what "you" ***are not***. All you have to do next is delete the negative answers. After that, apply the same technique to the other aspects of your "knowledge".

> Use the present existence in the best possible way. Tie the loose ends and leave everything behind. In the silent emptiness of eternity any luggage is obsolete.

A "Piece" of Mind

April 20th, 2003.

Mt Borovnik (Montenegro), 1935 meters above sea level.

…Alone. There is no other human being for at least five kilometers around. The snow under your feet is hard and dry. A spring breeze, not that cold… The air is crisp and clean. A bird, or two (!?) …up, down, on the left, right… everywhere. White clouds in the sky.

Mountains wherever you look: some with distinct edges, glistening in the sun, and others almost hidden in the haze. Your eyes are searching and absorbing…

Now close them. Let the sun touch your face. You do not feel tired. Fatigue always disappears when you reach the summit.

Suddenly and inexplicably – complete silence. You become aware of it just like that: suddenly and inexplicably! You hear silence.

Emptiness… … …

Open your eyes, slowly. Everything is perfectly calm. The mountains are there, but they are not as important as they were … minutes ago. They are there, and that's it. You can hear the birds again… feel the wind, sun, smell, freshness… A clear, intensive sensation, but somehow you don't stick to it... No thoughts...

Exactly, no thoughts!

An extended moment… There are no troubles, desires … Even your own wife and children are no longer yours. You have nothing, need nothing, and you do not want anything.

There is no past: You can't (or do not even try to) remember anything, good or bad.

Now some thoughts are coming back, but they fade away in a second, become absolutely insignificant. You don't push them away – they fade away by themselves!

There is no future.

…The ideal time to die, with no fear and regrets, because you have just lived.

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